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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

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FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,
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COOPERATING
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CLOTHING



GRACE BAKER HILL

TEXTILES AND CLOTHING
DIVISION
SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS
FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

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GLOTHING

By GRACE BAKER HILL

The problem of the selection of clothing is much broader today than it was even a few years ago. We have many fabrics from which to choose and frequently we must select fabrics with which we have had no previous experience. Even if we have used materials of similar appearance we can not be sure that they were identical in fiber and construction. There are many new fibers and yarns used in fabrics and many old ones used under new names. We hear much of standard brands and guarantees, but most of these are still in the experimental stages and may mean little or much by way of consumer protection.

From the standpoint of design and color we have a bewildering range of choice. Design quality must be considered in relation to personality, coloring, texture, current style and occasions for which the garment is to be worn. The choice of color presents a similar range of problems if the garment is to be satisfactory. Selection of dress designs is complicated by the fact that we must usually make our choice on the basis of fashion pictures so distorted that they bear little resemblance to the average human figure. It is hard to translate the appearance of a fashion sketch or mannikin in terms of our own relatively shorter and wider figures.

In the search for things that are different the designers, particularly those who design inexpensive patterns and garments, often introduce meaningless and undesirable details to vary a common design. In our search for the unusual we must be careful to avoid useless and ugly features added to garments simply for the sake of variety.

In garment construction, standards have changed greatly in recent years. Form-fitting garments have caused the elimination of many seam and edge finishes and the introduction of others more in keeping with the general design. Changes in style also bring changes in standards and methods of fitting garments.

These are a few of the new problems confronting the person who selects or constructs garments for herself and her family. It is hoped that this bulletin may be of value in helping to solve some of the problems suggested.

FABRIC SELECTION

DURABILITY

In choosing a fabric for any given purpose, fiber, construction and color or decoration probably will need to be considered. Some-

times fibers may be recognized by appearance, but adulteration and imitation are common enough to make this practice unsafe. Often sales people are not informed as to the goods they handle, and so their opinions are not always reliable. Simple tests are useful in identifying some of the textile fibers. In general we may confuse wool with cotton, cotton with linen, and rayon with silk. Both animal and vegetable fibers may be recognized by means of the burning test. Wool, which is an animal fiber, burns slowly, forming a bead-like ash and giving off strong odor. Cotton, which is vegetable in origin, burns freely with little ash. The odor is that of burned paper. Linen is a vegetable fiber and burns in much the same manner as cotton. A microscopic examination of fibers is the only accurate method of distinguishing between cotton and linen. Household tests using water or oil are so inaccurate as to be of little value.

Wool and silk burn alike but are easily recognized because of differences in texture and luster. We can distinguish between silk and rayon by the burning test. Pure silk when burned forms the bead-like ash characteristic of animal fibers. One type of rayon, known chemically as regenerated cellulose rayon, burns like cotton. The other type, which is cellulose acetate rayon, fuses into a hard rubber-like mass and gives off a faintly sour odor. Both varieties are sold under various trade names. The regenerated cellulose rayons can be laundered in much the same manner as cotton. They are not chemically affected by boiling or strong soaps but are so easily laundered that these are usually not needed. All rayons lose tensile strength when wet and so can not be rubbed or twisted without damaging the fabric. Cellulose acetate rayons melt at a comparatively low temperature and so can not be ironed with a very hot iron. They also dissolve in some solvents used by dry cleaners and should be labeled with the brand name before they are sent to be cleaned. This often prevents injury to the garments.

Many silks on the market will not burn in the fashion described above but will turn either black or white and hold their original shape after burning. This is due to the presence of metal weighting in the fabric. Weighting consists usually of either iron or tin salts which are introduced to add to the appearance of the fabric and to decrease the amount of silk needed. Weighting improves the texture and draping quality of silk but shortens its period of use. The amount of silk present may be very small compared to the finished weight of the fabric. Also, the chemical action of the metal on the silk causes splitting. This action is increased by

washing, sunlight, perspiration, sea water, and sea air. Weighting, if present in large quantities, may destroy the silk very rapidly. There are no generally accepted standards of amounts of weighting and no system of labels for the consumer. The label "pure dye silk" is accepted to mean that no weighting is present in the fabric.

In selecting fabrics and garments the woman who is buying on an economy basis needs to consider the foregoing points as well as many others. Questions which she asks herself should include the following: How long will the garment wear? Will the seams slip? Will it wrinkle or crush easily? Are the colors fast to sun, washing, and perspiration? Will it shrink? Can spots be removed at home?*

Many of these questions can be answered by a careful examination of the fabric. Details of construction which may injure the wearing quality of fabrics are quite easy to recognize. Some weaves of cloth are, in the nature of their construction, less durable than others of the same general quality. **Cord weave** is usually, other things being equal, not very durable. It may be recognized by the presence of large yarns or groups of yarns which give the fabric its characteristic texture. These cords are covered by fine yarns running in the opposite direction. Fabrics which are cord woven tend to slip in the direction of the cords. This slippage is more pronounced if the cords are in the crosswise direction of the fabric. Also the heavy cords tend to cut or wear away the finer yarns which cross them. Cord weaves are examples of poor fabric balance. The tensile strength in the direction of the cord is frequently two or three times that of the opposite direction. A well-balanced fabric should have yarns similar in size, strength and number, or an equivalent number of yarns with not very great difference in strength. For these reasons cord woven fabrics, although attractive in appearance, are often not the most practical materials to buy. Figure 1 shows a cord woven fabric of rayon and cotton at the end of three months of wear.

Skips or floats, resulting when one yarn or group of yarns is carried over several opposite yarns to produce a certain texture or luster, are defects from the standpoint of durability. These are found most frequently in figure weaves, steep twills, satins, and basket weaves. If the floats are long they catch and pull, spoiling the appearance of the fabric and often causing breaks or holes. If the fabric is washed roughly, broken and slipped yarns soon mar the beauty of the surface.

*From *Tex-Style Monthly Digest*, January, 1932, page 2.

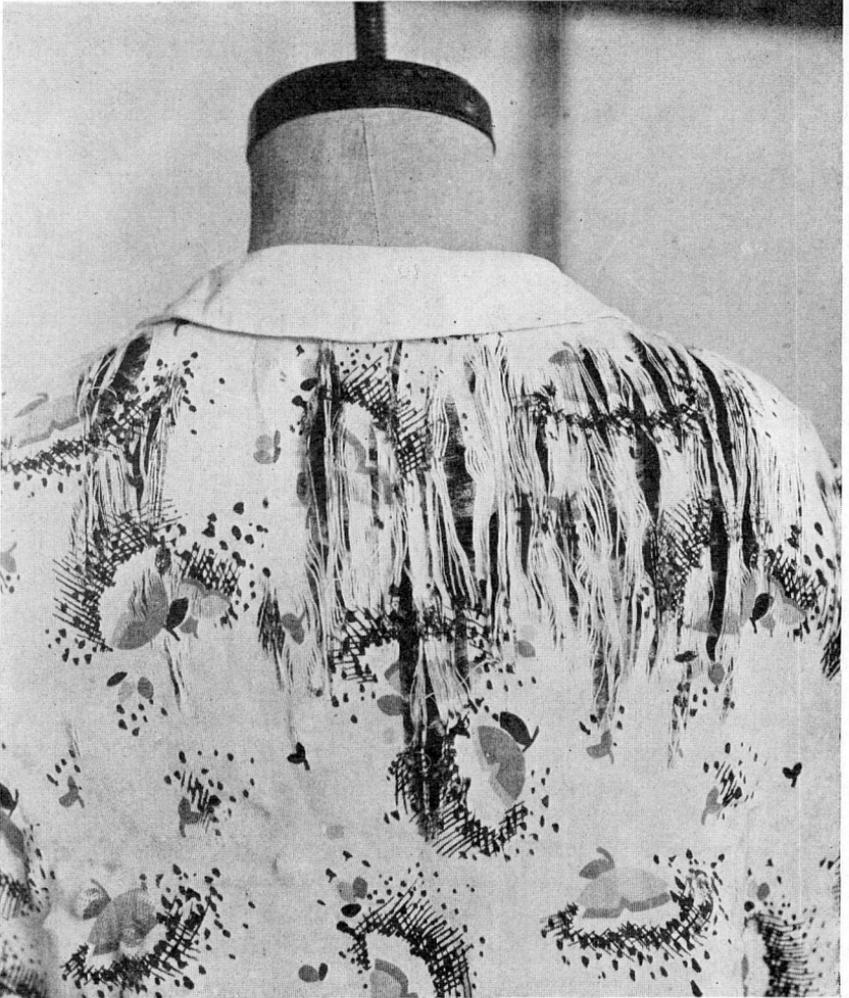


Fig. 1.—Dress made of cord woven rayon and cotton fabric, after three months' use.

Cut pile fabrics such as velvets, velveteens, and corduroys often shed pile on account of being poorly constructed. To be durable a pile fabric should have, first of all, a firmly constructed back. Loose weaving of the cloth will cause pile yarns to slip out of the fabrics. Some pile fabrics have the pile yarns woven in, in the shape of the letter U, others in the shape of the letter W. The U-shaped yarns slip out more easily than the W-shaped ones because they have less interlacing with the yarns of the back. The type of pile yarns can be determined by pulling out a yarn and examining it on a surface of contrasting color.

Crepe fabrics frequently slip in the direction of the filling yarns.

This may be due in part to a cord construction as was mentioned before. The most common cause is insufficient yarns in either the warp or the filling direction. Loose weaving permits the yarns to slip. Yarns made from smooth fibers such as silk or rayon slip more readily than those made from cotton, wool, or linen; but any fabric may be firm if it is well balanced and tightly constructed. Fabrics should be examined for balance and for closeness of weave. A sample of cloth may be tested for slippage by pulling it in each direction.

Color fastness of fabrics has been increased greatly in recent years. Today most fabrics carry a color fast guarantee of some sort. Guarantees may cover fastness to sunlight, fastness to washing or to boiling, and fastness to perspiration, or they may cover all these points. It is well to notice what the guarantee covers. Frequently one finds on the market color fast guarantees with no trade name given. These may be regarded with some doubt, as the guarantee as such is worth nothing. Local stores often make good any complaints on such fabrics, but it is much better for the complaint to go back to the maker of the goods. Only as defects are called to the attention of the producer can we hope to see the quality of goods on the market improve.

We have on the market today a few fabrics guaranteed not to shrink. Many fabrics, however, have no such guarantees and the purchaser is expected to take the risk. Some fabrics, such as crepes and mesh materials, tend to shrink with every laundering but usually can be stretched back to the original size. In general, fabrics of loose or crepe-like construction will shrink more than firmly constructed fabrics. Causes of shrinkage are not entirely understood, but in firmly constructed cloths there is no reason why we should not have shrinkage guarantees. The manufacturer will pre-shrink and label goods if his consumers demand it. At present washable yard goods should be thoroughly wet and then ironed before the garments are made. Most wool fabrics should be steamed and pressed. Except for wash silks, shrinking for silk fabrics is not recommended, as it often damages the appearance of the fabrics.

Crushing and wrinkling of fabrics is of importance to the busy woman. Linen is outstanding as a fabric which crushes easily. Cotton is more satisfactory for many uses, as it wrinkles less than linen. Rayon is similar to linen in that it requires much pressing. Crepe fabrics in general crush less than fabrics made of less tightly twisted yarns. Fabrics which will crush when worn may

be creased easily with the fingers. Pile fabrics almost always crush and so require more care than flat woven materials.

Surface finishes of various kinds may mislead the purchaser of fabrics. Starch and other dressings are often used to improve the appearance of cotton cloth. The presence of these materials may be recognized if one rubs the fabric between the hands. The dressing is removed and the fabric looks thin and rough. Moiré effects are made by pressing the design into the fabric. Silk or regenerated cellulose rayon fabrics are undesirable because the moiré pattern disappears after the fabric has been wet or after it has been steamed and pressed. Cellulose acetate rayons are the only materials which will hold a permanent moiré finish. This is due to the low melting point of acetate yarns.

Imitations of dotted Swiss fabrics and fabrics with embroidered patterns are made by applying a paste or felt mixture to the material in dots or other designs. These may be permanent or temporary, according to the materials and processes used. In general these fabrics are undesirable because they are cheaper imitations of more expensive goods. The large dots usually split and come off of the fabric. The small dots are frequently quite fast. In any case, the dots are difficult to sew through with a sewing machine. Silk fabrics are frequently dressed to improve their appearance. These dressings may cause the fabrics to water spot. Fabrics may be tested by wetting a small spot and allowing it to dry. If a circle is left on the fabric it is an indication of the presence of dressing. If the circle can not be removed by rubbing the material it shows the presence of a dressing which can be removed only by laundering or repeated dry cleaning. Such a fabric, if it is not washable, will add greatly to one's bills for dry cleaning.

The question of durability of fabrics is far from being solved by the suggestions just given. New problems are being encountered continually when purchasing fabrics. The only permanent and satisfactory solution probably lies in standardization and certification of fabrics. A few small beginnings have been made along the line of standardization. Home economics-trained women have been back of the standards promulgated or suggested. Further advances can not be made until the consumer feels her need of definite purchasing information for textiles and makes that need felt by the producers and sellers of goods.

TEXTURE

Garments, to be attractive, must be selected with careful consideration of texture and color. The texture of any garment should be consistent with the wearer, the design, the color and the

occasion or season for which it is to be worn. Very fine, dainty fabrics may be worn best by a person having a very fine, dainty skin. Roughness, lines or discolorations of the complexion will be exaggerated by contrast with the material. Sheer velvets, silk voiles, organdies and other fine smooth fabrics are difficult for the older women to use. Dull crepes or materials with linen finishes as well as those with irregularities introduced by pattern are much more becoming to the person of average complexion and texture of hair than are the fabrics just mentioned.

The texture of the fabric should also be consistent with the design of the dress. Soft spongy fabrics can never be kept in smart, tailored lines. Fabrics with tightly twisted filling yarns will hold pleats while those made with loosely spun yarns will always look unpressed. Very loosely constructed fabrics will continue to sag or stretch if cut on circular or bias lines.

Lustrous satins have a texture quite difficult for many women to wear. The smoothness of the fabric will accentuate any facial defects, while the high luster tends to make an older face look hard and unpleasing. The luster will also increase the apparent size of a large figure and call especial attention to large bust or hips. For an extremely thin figure a satin will often accent the lack of curves and make the wearer look even thinner. Satin costumes are made more wearable for the average person if the fabric does not come close to the face. A low neckline or contrasting collar or yoke often makes the fabric more becoming.

Texture and color should be consistent in a fabric. Rough tweeds and linens as well as rough sports crepes are not consistent with very dainty colors. Pastel colors are deadened and faded in appearance in these fabrics, while strong colors are subdued and keyed together when developed in rough texture. Sports fabrics should suggest sturdiness in their texture. Some examples of desirable textures for this purpose are tweeds, suitings, flannels, ratines, linens and crepes. Fabrics for dress wear may be either dainty or sumptuous in quality, according to the personality of the wearer. Wrong choice of texture can detract greatly from the beauty and utility of a garment. The texture of accessories such as hat, bag, shoes, gloves, and furs also must be considered if the assembled costume is to be effective. Carefully planned contrast in textures will add interest to a garment, just as contrast in color may relieve the monotony of an otherwise analogous color scheme.

COLOR

Color and line are the two outstanding features of any garment. The selection and combination of colors is at once difficult and fascinating. Individual preferences and characteristics as well as the texture, line and design of a fabric will affect the choice of color. Care must be taken not to allow unreasonable prejudices against certain hues or unreasonable preferences for certain hues to govern one's selection of colors. Most people have decided views as to the colors they can or can not wear. It is well to keep in mind that no one person can successfully wear all values and intensities of any hue and almost any one can wear some variations of any hue. We should not be too limited in our choice of colors. While it is true that a consistent color scheme is necessary in order to build an efficient and economical wardrobe, it is also true that an occasional "new" color introduced is a pleasant change for both wearer and observer.

Time changes greatly the hues, values and intensities we can wear. In general, as a person grows older her color scheme of eyes, hair, and complexion becomes somewhat grayed. Less intense colors are needed in the garments to keep the clothing as a background for the wearer. Shades of red, yellow, brown, and henna are almost universally unbecoming with gray hair. If these have been becoming colors it is often hard to realize that a complete change has occurred. Dainty colors becoming to the young girl may be quite unattractive when worn by the mature woman. A good method of selecting colors is to try the effect of colored fabrics of different textures in a good light. The wearer should not trust entirely to her own judgment but should have the assistance of several other people.

Hues, values and intensities of colors must be selected in relation to the amount of color to be used. Colors are classed as warm or cold, or as advancing or receding, according to hue. Red, yellow and orange are warm or advancing colors, while blue, green and purple are receding colors. Warm colors are cheerful in effect but often make an object appear larger than it is. Cool colors are quite in effect and tend to make an object look smaller than it is. For over-size figures the range of cool colors contains the best possibilities. Small areas of warm colors may be introduced to add interest to the costume. A successful costume can not be made of approximately equal amounts of warm and cool colors. The color scheme must be dominated by one type and may be accented by the other.

The brightness or dullness of a color often determines its use-

fulness in costume. According to the "law of areas," large areas should be dull in color and the smaller the area the more intense the color which may be used in it. This law applies either to the entire costume or to decoration on a costume. Middle values, those neither very dark nor very light, blend best with the general background and therefore attract less attention to the size of an object.

There are many things in combinations of colors which should be considered. An accent color should be repeated more than once in a costume or the effect will be that of an accidental spot rather than of a decoration. The decoration should form a logical part of the costume. Colors which are close together on the color wheel are easiest to combine, but the results may be monotonous if no note of contrast is introduced. This contrast may be black, white or a complementary color.

The primary colors may be thought of as arranged at the points of an equilateral triangle. They are red, yellow, and blue. These colors are not related and are difficult to use together. They are also rather uninteresting and fairly harsh if used pure. By combining these colors in pairs we get orange from red and yellow, green from yellow and blue, and purple from blue and red. These are called secondary colors and each has one parent color in common with each other color. Therefore, they are easier to combine than are the primary colors and are more interesting. Secondary colors may be combined further to form still other colors. These are red orange, yellow orange, yellow green, blue green, blue violet, and red violet. Since each of these hues is made by the combination of several colors, they are subtle and interesting and are quite easy to use in combinations. They may also vary greatly in hue if different proportions of color are used to make them.

Colors may be combined, as we have said, with those coming next to them on the scale. They may also be combined with their complementary color, which is the color directly opposite on the color wheel as, for example, blue green may be combined with red orange in the proper proportions. Two adjacent colors may be combined with their complements in one color scheme. A color may be combined with the two colors which go to make up its complement or any three colors at equal distances from each other on the wheel may be used as triads.

The rules governing the combination of colors are too complicated to be taken in detail in a work of this kind. Perhaps the most successful method for the untrained person to use in combining colors is to analyze a beautiful and suitable color scheme

in a picture or fabric and use its plan as a basis for her color scheme. A study of color will be of value to every woman. The revised edition of *Art in Every Day Life*, by Harriet and Vetta Goldstein, is a practical volume for further study.

TEXTILE DESIGN

In choosing the fabric for a dress one must determine the relative merits of plain or figured materials for her particular purpose. Some of the points discussed here may be of help in making the decision. For formal occasions plain fabrics are always a better choice than patterned ones, because they are more dignified in appearance. They also stress beauty of line which should be a characteristic of formal dress. Plain fabrics are of course suitable for all occasions and are comparatively easy to choose well. The complications which arise when we consider pattern, as well as color, texture, and durability, are avoided by using plain color materials. A good quality fabric shows its beauty of texture in a plain color, while in a patterned material this beauty usually is not seen. A solid color garment displays good structural lines and good workmanship to the best advantage. Of course, the reverse of this also is true. Figured fabrics are often easily recognized as belonging to a past season if the garment is worn longer than one year. Both the wearer and the beholder tire quickly of a pronounced fabric design. In general, we may say that for the sake of dignity, ease of choice, distinction and practicality, plain fabrics often are the best choice for dress materials.

However, patterned fabrics have a place in our wardrobes. For summer use, dainty patterns often are cool and attractive in appearance. For general wear, a dark print in a small all-over design is very satisfactory. An occasional printed fabric adds interest to the wardrobe. Often a two-color print will permit variation in the use of accessories. This is one way of getting variety with a limited number of clothes.

In selecting plain fabrics the suggestions concerning texture and color already given will be of value. For patterned material these must be considered, but design quality is of importance also. Pattern in fabric may be produced by figure weaving, embroidery, dyeing or printing. Figure weaves and embroidery have the advantage of having interesting texture as well as design. Some fabrics of these types are successfully used for formal wear along with the plain colored materials. Fiber dyed, yarn dyed, or printed materials are usually best suited for street, sports or informal wear.

Much might be said as to the history of textile designs, but from a practical viewpoint we may classify patterns as variations of the stripe or plaid, of the polka dot, or of some floral designs. A few fabrics show pictorial decorations such as landscapes, architectural elements, or human or animal figures. In general these are not suited to garment construction and so will not be considered here.

Stripes or plaids are geometric in form. They often mark off very definite areas on the fabric and so accentuate either largeness or smallness of the wearer. The effect of the fabric is not good if the eye is led restlessly back and forth or up and down by the design. The general belief is that lengthwise stripes will lengthen and slenderize a heavy figure. In actual practice this usually is not true, as there may be a crosswise eye movement from stripe to stripe which accentuates width and shortness instead.

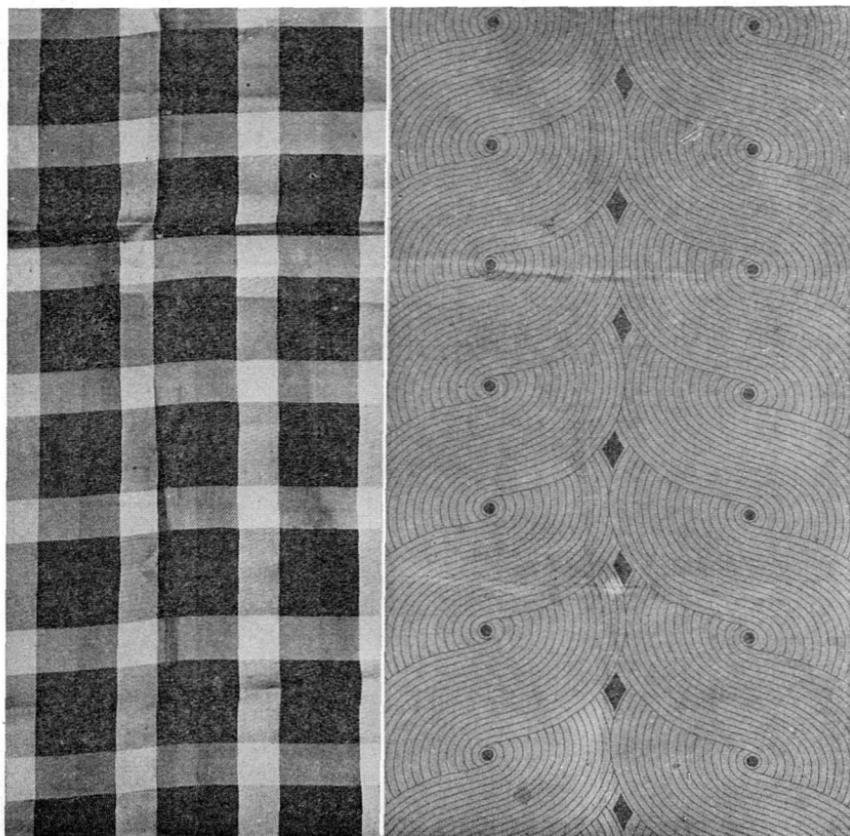


Fig. 2.—Left: A poor design in a plaid pattern; right: an interesting variation of a diagonal plaid design.

Stripes are uninteresting if they are made up of equal widths of two or more colors or if one stripe is exactly two or three times the width of another. Interesting variations in widths and good color combination are necessary if a striped fabric is desirable for general use. Diagonal stripes are often pleasing if of good proportion.

Plaids are fabrics striped on both warp and filling direction. The simplest form of plaid pattern has blocks of different hues or values in squares or rectangles. These may be small or large. The large designs are usually rather spotty and monotonous. Those with rectangular blocks are more interesting than those made up of squares. Small plaids often give an intermingled effect of dark and light which makes a pleasing variation of an

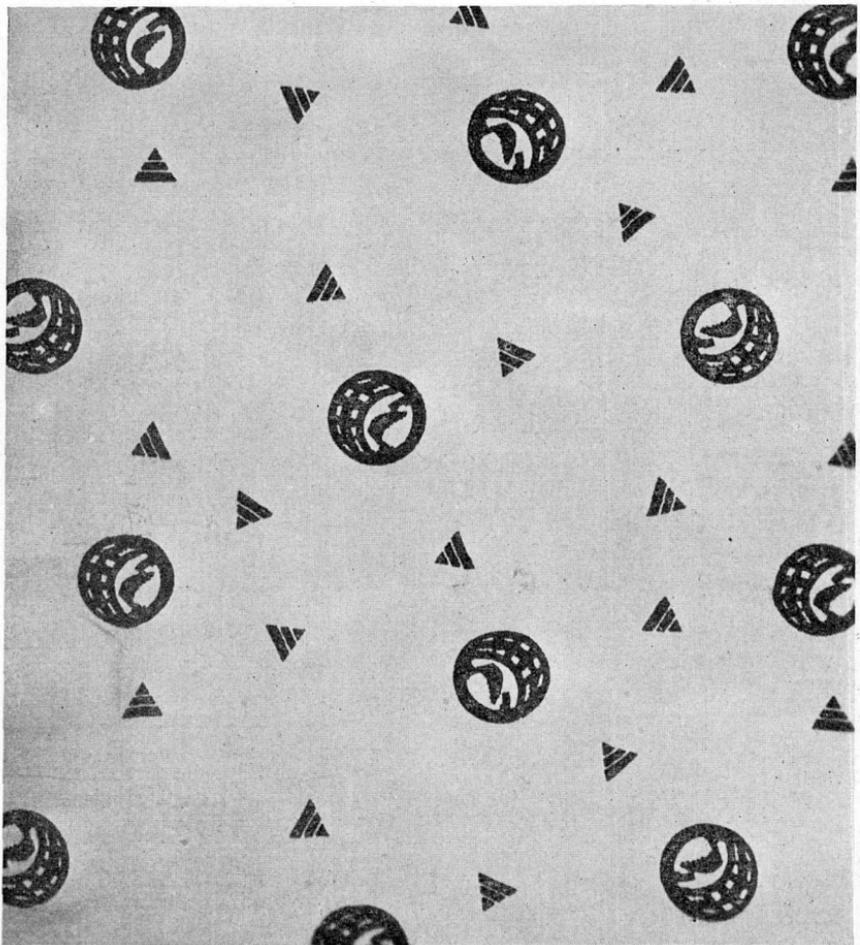


Fig. 3.—A restless and uninteresting polka dot pattern.

all-over pattern. Interesting plaids have considerable variation in color or value and have long, slender rectangles or are diagonal instead of running on the lines of warp and filling. Plaid designs, unless very small, complicate the cutting and putting together of a garment. It is difficult to make the checks fit together at side seams or come together in any regular fashion. Many plaids are not the same at the upper and lower edges of the check and so have a definite up and down direction which must be considered in cutting a dress. Figure 2 shows a poor and a good plaid design.

Polka dot patterns are usually poor in design. While they are abstract and formal in shape, it is difficult to construct either an interesting or connected design using them. Large dots placed

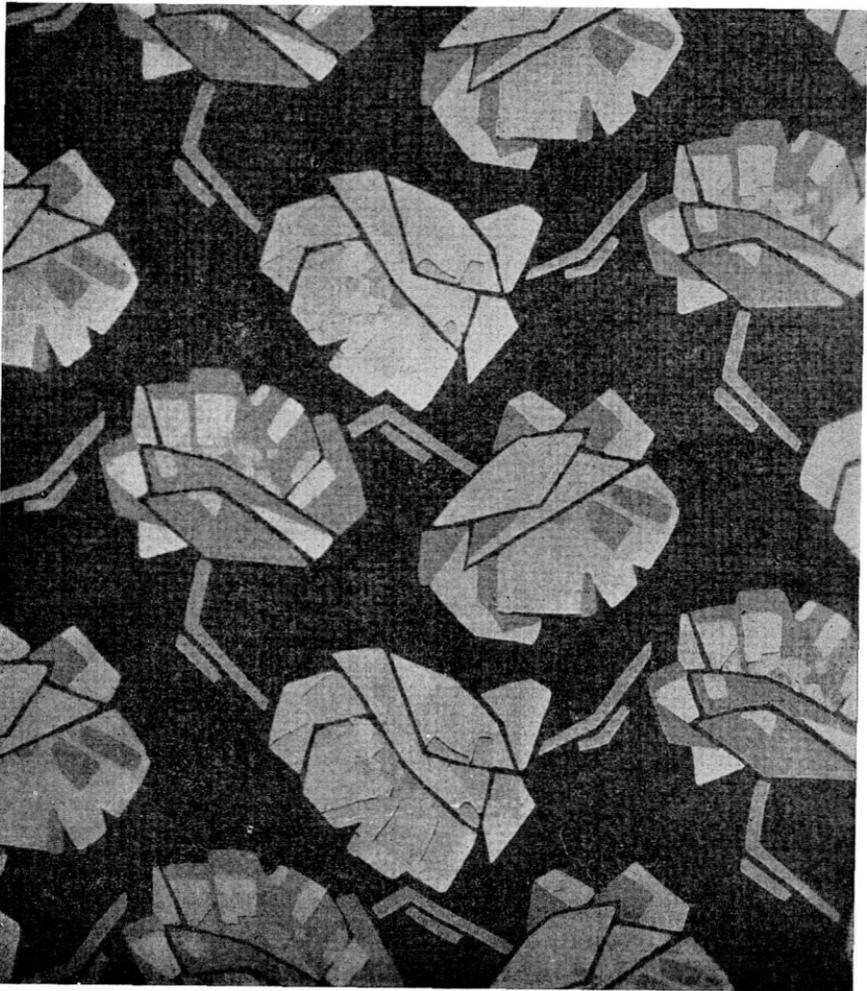


Fig. 4.—Rose design which is angular and lacks unity.

at regular intervals on a fabric appear as isolated spots instead of a design as the eye is not led from one to the other. Width of figure is accentuated as the dots and spaces suggest units of measurement. Good polka dot patterns must have interesting space relations, the dots must be close enough to form an all-over effect, and there must not be too much color contrast between dot and background. Very small dots are dainty and may be used for children's dresses. They also suit the dainty type of adult. Dotted swiss is a good example of this type of dot. Figure 3 is in

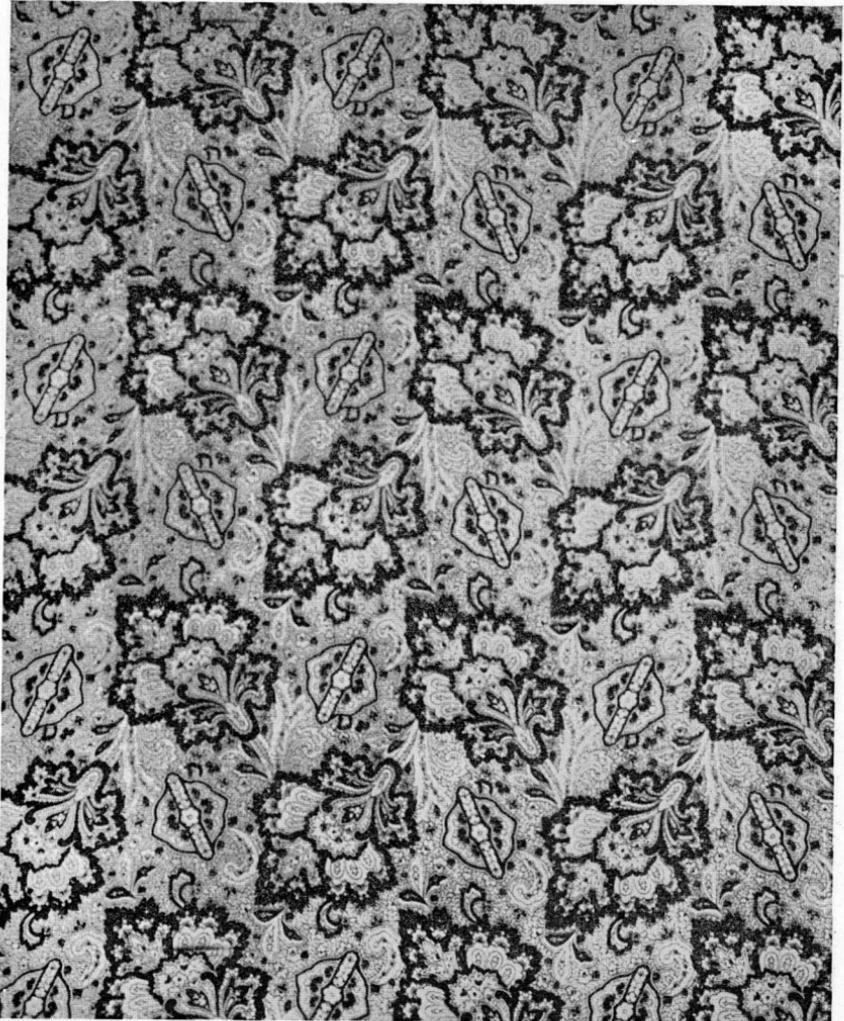


Fig. 5.—Modern adaptation of the Paisley pattern, showing interesting shapes and details.

a variation of a polka dot pattern. It is spotty and restless in effect. The units of patterns are rather interesting in shape, but the eye is led in many directions by the large dots and by the small triangles leading to these dots. The fabric does not have unity or repose.

Most of our patterned fabrics have their inspiration in floral or leaf forms. In general the design of a floral pattern is poor when it is a photographic copy of a flower or plant. The outlines are so detailed as to be uninteresting, and there has been no at-



Fig. 6.—Arabic lily design, showing good adaptation of a floral design.

tempt to create a formal design such as belongs with the texture of a piece of cloth. Flower shapes lose much of their charm placed flat on fabric in isolated units. The design of any fabric should be impersonal enough that one does not object to seeing it cut at any point. This is certainly not true of life-size, naturalistic floral designs.

Design outlines should be decorative, and there should be some means of connecting pattern units. Figure 4 shows a rose design which has been slightly formalized but still has naturalistic coloring and general naturalistic shape. The fabric has the effect of unconnected spots of pattern instead of a unified design. It seems crowded and monotonous, and the outlines are harsh and uninteresting. The cutting or folding of lines in this fabric would be very disturbing in effect.

Figure 5 shows a successful attempt to formalize a floral pattern. The particular flowers can not be identified as the design is quite abstract. It is dainty in effect with much interest in both outline and detail. There is a nice proportion of dark and light areas. The fine tracery in the background ties all units of pattern together. This is a modern print adapted from the historic Paisley patterns.

Figure 6 is a reproduction of a patterned chiffon velvet. Here again the inspiration is from floral or leaf design, but instead of reproductions of natural objects we have beautiful and interesting abstract shapes. The curves are pleasing and the units of design, while not actually connected, lead the eye naturally from one part of the fabric to another with no interruption. There is enough variety in shape so that the fabric is not monotonous. This design is striking and dramatic but is excellent in line and proportion. It is probably an adaptation of the Arabic lily design.

The following points may be summarized as of value in selecting a figured fabric:

1. The design should give the effect of an all-over pattern rather than of a series of spots.
2. The design should be abstract rather than pictorial.
3. The design should derive its beauty from good proportion and beautiful line rather than from its association with natural objects.
4. The design should not complicate unduly the cutting or construction of the garment.
5. The design should not accentuate size by giving a definite unit of measurement for width or height.
6. The design should suit the personality of the wearer.

7. The design should be consistent with the texture and color of the fabric.

Patterned fabrics may be quieted by using the predominating color in decoration or accessories. A solid color is often more effective than a figured fabric but the latter may be very desirable and usable if carefully selected. In case of doubt, plain color fabrics are a much safer choice.

GARMENT SELECTION

In selecting dress designs we must consider the personality of the wearer, her physical characteristics and the principles of design. Some of the styles of past years are quite ridiculous to us today while others are still attractive. If we examine several garments of each type, we find that the basic difference is one of line. Dresses which distort or greatly exaggerate portions of the body look very strange as soon as their temporary vogue has passed. Hoop skirts, bustles, hour-glass waists and great puffed sleeves all illustrate this fact. The dresses of past generations which we now admire most are those which followed in general the normal lines of the human figure and possessed real beauty of line. This gives us a basis for critical examination of the styles of any season. Always we will find some designs which are freakish and distorted along with others which are graceful and natural in line. The well-dressed woman will select her garments from the second group.

FACTOR OF PERSONALITY

There are, however, many other factors involved in choosing the right design for any one person. People differ greatly in type and personality, and it is only as a garment expresses the individuality of the wearer that it is satisfying either to her or to the observer. The study of types and the analysis of personalities is both fascinating and profitable in connection with clothing problems. Generally speaking, we may classify ourselves and others as belonging to one or more distinct types. These may be called for convenience the dainty type, the athletic type, and the unusual or dramatic type. Colors, textures and designs for costumes may be grouped around these different classifications.

While actually there are few pure types, it is easier to give the characteristics of each type alone. The woman who belongs to the **dainty type** is characteristically small rather than large, with fair coloring, curly hair, and small, clear-cut features. She is rather quiet in manner and gives the effect of timidity and gentleness. Her best colors are the pastel shades and white. She may

also wear colors of middle value with nothing by way of startling contrast in color. The fabrics suited to her are found in the thin, soft or clinging materials. Textures should be smooth but not highly lustrous. Fabric designs should be small and unobtrusive. In dress design the whole effect should be one of daintiness and charm. Garments may be intricately cut, but over-decoration must be avoided. Dainty details such as tucks, scallops, lace, and embroidery may be used in limited amounts as decoration.

The woman of **athletic type** is not the Amazonian creature which the term often suggests. She may be small or large, but her characteristics are straightforwardness and frankness of manner and physical vitality and force. Her coloring is usually medium rather than extremely dark or light. She is a business-like person and her garments are planned and selected accordingly. She uses fabrics which suggest sturdiness and utility rather than fragility. Rough or firm textures go well with the tailored design of her costume. With her clear coloring she can use rather strong clear colors effectively. Pastel shades as well as very unusual variations of color do not fit with her personality. In patterned fabrics she may use plaids, stripes, dots, and geometric or formal designs. The designs for her dresses are tailored in effect and are made bi-symmetric, that is, the two halves of the dress are alike. Buttons and bound buttonholes, self-trimming, such as bandings, facings and cording, and tailored pockets, are good methods of decorating the dresses of this type. Pleats are good. In general the garments are planned to allow for activity.

The unusual or **dramatic type** of person differs greatly from the others. Characteristically she is tall and slender. Her general appearance tends to be both striking and aloof. Her coloring may be light or dark but is frequently quite decidedly one or the other. In general she can wear unusual tones of color and unusual and striking color combinations. Her garments may be more extreme in cut than for either of the other types, and she should avoid small, decorative details. Her costumes are frequently made in informal balance with collar lines and side closings which are not bi-symmetric. Lines should be long and unbroken and the general effect one of dignity.

We all have difficulty in classifying ourselves as to type. Most people are combinations of two or more types. If we can place ourselves as to predominating characteristics we can choose garments which express us instead of conflicting with our personalities. To be well dressed there must be unity between the costume and the type of person wearing it.

FACTOR OF PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The cartoonist makes great fun of the wealthy and fat dowager

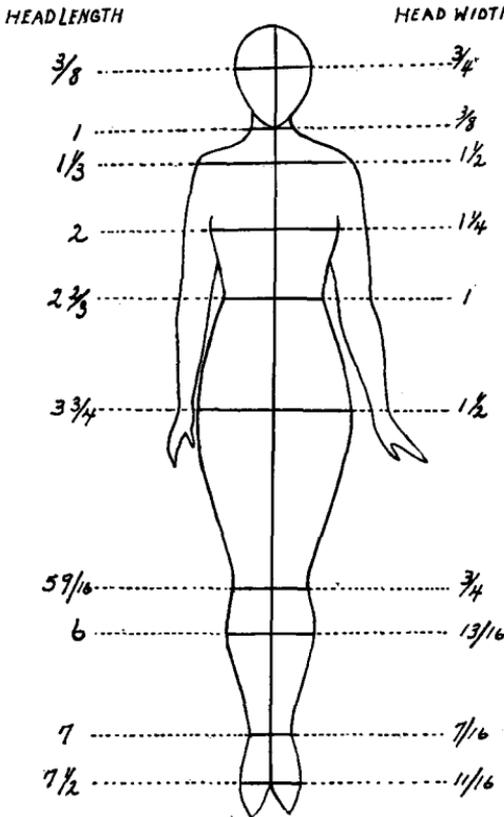


Fig. 7.—Figure design drawn to scale.
Average figure.

who selects her clothes on the basis of how they look when worn by a slender and beautiful model. We smile at her lack of judgment and fail to realize that we do much the same thing when we buy a pattern. Most of us have had the experience of having a quite unattractive dress made from a pattern which was quite pleasing as illustrated. The whole difficulty was probably a matter of differences in proportion. If we differ considerably from the proportions of the fashion sketch, the entire effect of the dress may be changed. Therefore, to select a pattern successfully we need to know how we differ from the fashion figure and also

how we differ from the standard or average figure of our height.

According to statistics* the average woman is about seven and one-half heads tall, one and one-half heads wide at the shoulders, one and one-fourth heads wide at the bust, one head wide at the waist and one and one-half heads wide at the hips. These measurements give the figure in terms of proportion instead of in terms of feet and inches. We have all seen the small woman who can wear lines usually thought of as belonging only to the tall person and the woman who measured perhaps five feet six inches but still appears short. In both cases actual measurements tell little, but measurements in terms of head lengths will give needed facts as to figure proportion.

The fashion designer has found that she can add elegance and

*Goldstein—Art in Every Day Life, pages 318-320.

style to her sketches by making the figure longer and narrower than the normal figure. The average fashion sketch is from

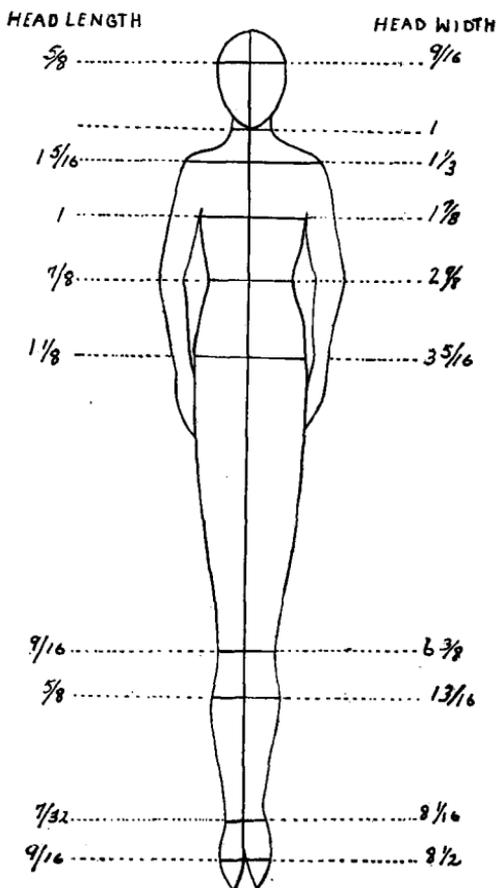


Fig. 8.—Fashion figure.

eight to nine heads tall and very slender. The legs are much longer than is normal. Figures 7, 8, and 9, show an average figure, a fashion figure taken from a pattern sketch and an actual human figure drawn to scale. It is easy to see that designs may appear on fashion sketches which can not be worn successfully by a person of average figure. Figure 10 shows the same dress design on each of the three figures. This design is becoming to the fashion figure, is wearable for the average figure and quite impossible for the individual figure shown.

From this illustration it is clear that every woman should know how she differs in figure from the fashion figure and

from the normal figure. Every one desires to look normal, and correct selection and alteration of design help to make this possible. Personal opinion is not a sufficient guide. We tend to exaggerate in our minds some of our defects and to minimize others. A careful checking of proportion is the only way to be sure of the matter.

A front view picture taken in a bathing suit or closely fitted dress may be used in comparison with the normal figure shown here. The figure may also be measured against the wall and proportions checked. After differences are actually known the dress design may be selected and alterations made to correct or minimize them. An outline drawing of one's figure drawn to scale is

desirable, as the dress design may be sketched in and then it is possible to see how the design affects the lines of the figure. An

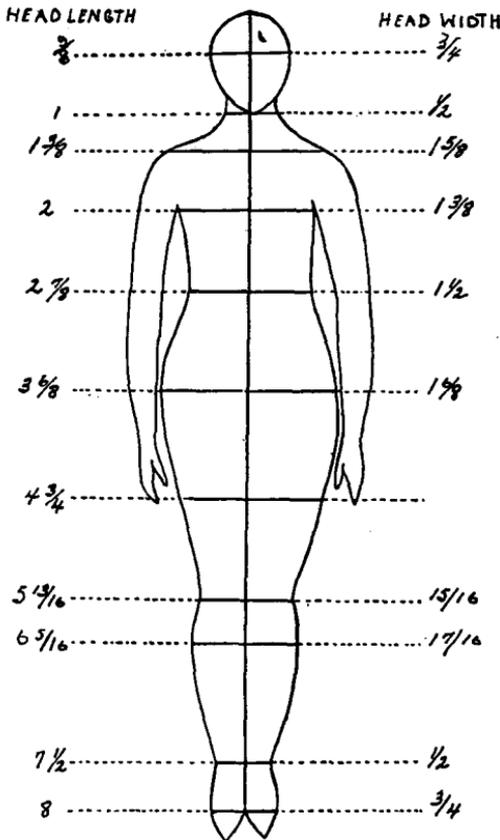


Fig. 9.—An individual figure.

accurate knowledge of one's proportions makes possible intelligent selection and alteration of ready-made dresses and dress patterns.

It is an unusual woman who does not have some variations from the normal in line or color. As we have said, the problem of dressing to best advantage can not be solved without giving definite attention to these points of difference. Perhaps the most common deviation from the average figure is due to overweight. If a person is stout, the general plan of dressing must center around making the figure inconspicuous, attracting attention away from the silhouette and avoiding anything which stresses

bulk or increases apparent width. As has been mentioned before, the stout woman should use fabrics which are dull in luster, about middle value and grayed in intensity. The general color effect should be fairly dark but not black, as black calls attention to outlines. Lines should run unbroken in effect from shoulder to hem. The center of interest should run up and down the center front connecting with a V neck line. The garment should be neat but not closely fitted. An overweight person in a tight dress gives the effect of being larger than she really is. Fabrics must be firm enough not to cling, or the same effect will be produced. Flat collars are usually more becoming than collarless necklines. They should be rather narrow and should taper to a long point in front. Tiny details of decoration make the figure look larger by contrast and also break the desired sweep of lines.

Hats are better if of medium size with no trailing decoration. Shoes and hats should be of the same color as the dress to give added length of line. Shoes should be loose enough so that the foot does not appear to bulge over the top and should have enough width at the heel to give the appearance of being a firm base for the figure.

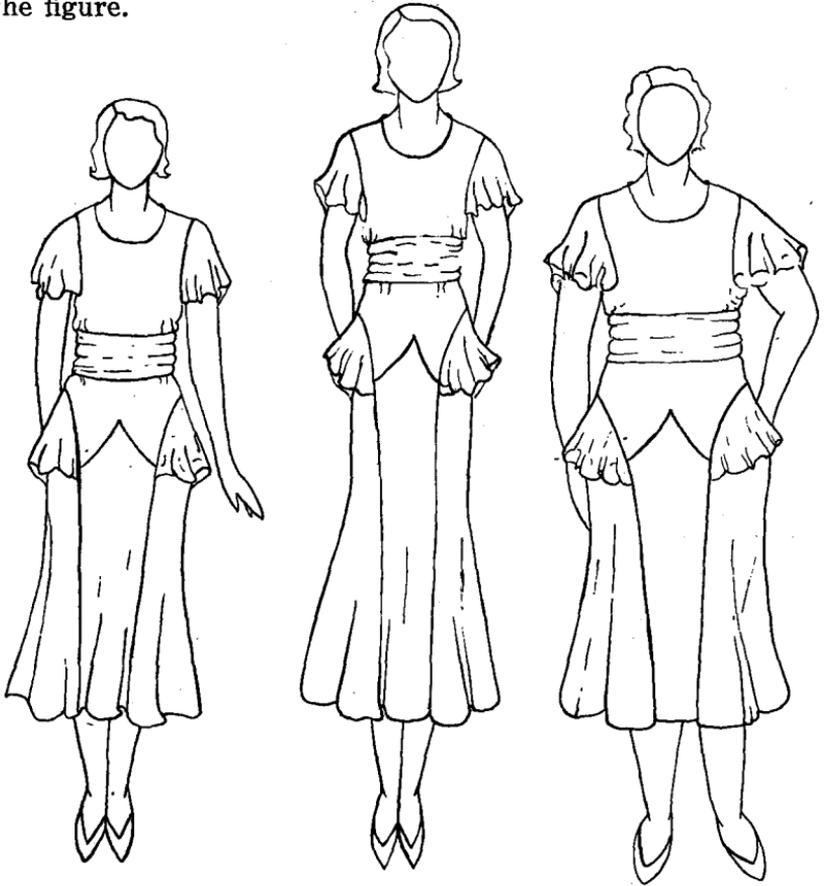


Fig. 10.—The same dress design on an average figure, a fashion figure and an individual figure.

The woman who is abnormally thin presents quite a different problem. Fabrics for her use should be crisp enough to stand slightly away from the body. Thin velvets are also good, as they give an effect of bulk. Lines should lead diagonally or crosswise rather than up and down. Frilled and ruffled collars and dress fronts are becoming. Considerable decorative detail may be used but the dress must not look heavy. Extreme looseness of a dress always suggests that the wearer is losing weight, so the dress should be fitted carefully but not tightly. Raglan and peasant

sleeves reveal thinness in the shoulders and arms and should be avoided.

Round shoulders are a figure defect which can be minimized by careful selection and adaptation of the dress design. Saddle shoulders, drop shoulders, and raglan sleeves are to be avoided. The shoulder seam may be placed a half-inch or more back of the top of the shoulder. A small collar which rolls slightly straightens the line of the back by filling in the neck curve. A collarless neckline accentuates this curve. Capes or bolero jackets which come below the waist line help to conceal the back curves. Frilled collars and gathers or tucks in the blouse front keep the front line from appearing shorter than that of the back. Hats should be fairly small and should not have any decoration which droops at the back.

Large hips often look larger because they are contrasted with a slender waist and narrow shoulders. To make the hips appear smaller the shoulder line may be widened by the use of bertha collars, egaulette effects, or saddle shoulder lines. The waist line should not be fitted closely. Capes, short jackets, or blouses just above the hip line make the hips appear narrower. Crosswise lines such as skirt yokes increase the apparent width. A skirt which flares from the belt and is fairly long gives a slendering line. The skirt may have panels which produce vertical line effects and break the width into smaller spaces.

Ankles which are thinner or thicker than the accepted standard are a problem to the woman who wishes to appear of normal proportions. Much can be done to render either very slender or fat ankles inconspicuous. In both cases stockings should be of inconspicuous hue, middle value, and low intensity. Extremes of dark and light are to be avoided. There should be little contrast between dress and hose and between shoes and hose. Skirts should never be extremely short and should flare moderately. Very tight skirts will accentuate both types of defects. For the very thin ankle care must be taken that shoes do not look heavy. Contrasts in color, soles which stand out, and wide leather heels, as well as much decoration will make the ankle look too slim to carry the weight of the shoe. In the case of fat ankles the shoe must look large enough to give a firm base for the ankle. For this reason very dainty shoes with slender high heels are a poor choice. Tight straps or a tight fit across the instep will cause the foot to look fat and bulging. The costume as a whole should have the center of interest at the upper part so that attention is called away from the feet.

DRESS CONSTRUCTION

FITTING OF PATTERNS

The average woman who does her own sewing will find that she gets much better results by using commercial patterns than by cutting garments more or less "by guess." This does not mean, of course, that a new pattern must be purchased for each different garment made, but a well-fitting foundation pattern should be used and varied as is necessary. In general, any pattern used should be of the correct bust measure. There is one exception to this rule. In case the person to be fitted is small through the bust and very wide in hips and shoulders, the pattern should be large enough to give the correct shoulder width. The extra material will have to be fitted out at the underarm seam. Except for this type of figure the pattern should be purchased according to bust measure.

Pattern alterations should be made before any cutting of the fabric is attempted. Sleeve patterns may be lengthened or shortened by insets or tucks above and below the elbow in order not to lose the shape and proportion of the sleeve. Skirts made with gores or panels may be changed in length by tucks or insets rather than by removing or adding material at the hem line. To fit sloping shoulders the top seam will have to be made larger as it approaches the arms eye. For square shoulders the seam may be taken larger at the neck line. After a pattern has been correctly fitted, a foundation pattern may be cut from it out of muslin or tough paper. This is useful for cutting many garments. It is also valuable in altering a new pattern, as alterations can be made directly from it instead of by fitting the pattern on the figure.

Any pattern envelope and folder should be read carefully, and much time can often be saved by following the directions for lay-outs and order of procedure. Notches should be marked by chalk or thread rather than by cutting. Notches cut into the fabric reduce the strength of seams if the seam allowance of the pattern has been followed. On firm fabrics, notches may sometimes be cut out instead of into the seam line. In loosely woven fabrics, however, these tend to fray and disappear before they can be used. Before doing any cutting one needs to be sure that all the perforations indicating a straight thread of the fabric are placed on the line of a warp or filling thread. This is essential if the garment is to hang well.

DRESS FORMS

A dress form of some sort is a great convenience for the woman who makes her own clothes. There are several commercially

made forms on the market, but one can be made at home which is more satisfactory and less expensive. There are two kinds of dress forms which are fairly easy to make. A set of materials may be purchased for making one kind. This set consists of two high-necked, knitted vests and several rolls of heavy, gummed paper. One vest is fitted on the person for whom the form is to be made and strips of the paper are pasted to it according to direction given with the outfit. The form is finally removed by splitting it down the front and back. It is fastened together, shellacked several times inside and out, covered with the second vest, and mounted for use.

The second type of dress form is made by fitting a muslin waist exactly to the figure. This waist has a high collar and extends below the largest part of the hips. After the waist is fitted and stitched it may be filled with tissue paper, shredded newspaper, excelsior, or cotton. Care must be taken to keep the proportion and thickness of the figure as well as its size. A stand for either form may be purchased or made at home. For the homemade stand a coat hanger can be fastened to the top and the shoulders of the form fastened to it for the first type, or built over it for the second. The form should be placed at the correct height so that hems may be leveled and lengths determined on it. An arm form should be made to use with either dress form. It is made by stuffing a tightly fitted muslin sleeve. It is finished at shoulder and wrist and can be pinned to the form as needed. A correctly proportioned dress form makes fitting oneself very easy. It saves much time and effort for the woman who sews, and it makes possible much better results than could be obtained otherwise.

FITTING OF GARMENTS

In fitting any dress or coat, some fundamental points should be observed. Shoulder seams must come directly down the top of the shoulder and not drift toward front or back. Shoulder lines must be long enough to allow the sleeve seam line to come to the top of the arm. Under arm seams are to come straight down from the under arm to the hem. Any pulling or sagging toward back or front will cause the garment to hang poorly. If the dress has a tailored or a roll collar the neckline should fit close to the neck at the back and sides. Pleats must be hung with a straight thread of fabric on the edge of each pleat or they will not stay in place. The belt of a semi-fitted dress should not be fitted tight enough to break the line from shoulder to hem. The neckline of a dress should be finished before sleeves are set in. Collar,

sleeves, and belt must be finished before the hem is adjusted. All seams must be pressed as they are made. This enables one to see how the garment fits. Also, good pressing can not be done on the completed garment unless all seams have been pressed in the proper direction during the construction process.

FINISHES

Seam finishes vary with fabrics used and with location of seams. The tendency, induced by present close fitting styles of dress, is for seam finishes to be as flat as possible. Bound seams are almost never used except in coats or jackets on account of their bulk. Firm wool or silk fabrics may have the seams finished by pinking. Very loosely woven fabrics may be overcasted. In wash dresses seams must be protected against fraying. Seams pressed open and each edge hemmed with a single turn hem are flat and durable. The edges may also be overcasted instead of being hemmed. The imitation French seam is made by turning the single turn hems toward each other and stitching both edges together. French seams are undesirable for any fitted garment, as they are fitted on the first seam line and then the final stitching is from one-eighth to one-quarter of an inch further in, which means that the garment is considerably smaller than it was fitted. Flat fell seams are desirable on baby clothes and underwear because they are smooth inside. They are also tailored in appearance and are used on blouses, shirts, and boys' suits. Lap seams are made by turning the edge on one piece of fabric and then lapping this edge over another piece as in joining a yoke to a blouse or skirt. This is the most satisfactory method of joining a curved or pointed piece of fabric to another piece. The stitching is outside and should come as close to the edge of the fold as is possible.

Stitch lengths should be regulated according to the weight of the fabric used. Fine fabrics require short stitches while on heavy fabrics longer stitches look better. Facings and hems on skirts should be finished by hand. The exposed stitch should be very short on both inside and outside and should be carried forward inside the turned edge. Front facings on blouses and coats may be hemmed on the edge and caught to the garment at the shoulder seam and hem instead of being sewed fast all the way down.

Decoration should be carefully planned in relation to the structural design of the dress. Many dresses are ruined by over-decoration or decoration which cheapens the garment. Bound buttonholes and tailored pockets, if well made, add much to a

tailored garment but should never be attempted in loosely woven or knitted fabrics. Cordings and decorative facings are attractive finishes on many garments. Embroidery stitches have some place on children's garments but usually should be omitted on adult clothing. Faggoting, however, is an interesting way of joining two edges together. It is serviceable and may be used on many fabrics. It is particularly valuable in making over dresses.

In general the dress should be planned as a whole and no decoration for which there is not a reason should be included. Patterns often show ties which do not tie and buttons which do not button. In the better grade of ready-made dresses these decorations actually do what they suggest and the effect will amply repay the extra labor if they are made to do so on dresses constructed at home. Loose belts look better and stay in place better if held by buttonholed loops at the sides. Belt-ends should be long enough to pull through buckles but should not hang loose. These small details often determine the style of the garment and are worth careful attention at all times.

STANDARDS OF DRESS

It is possible to be well dressed or poorly dressed at almost any income level. The amount of intelligent planning used in creating and assembling a costume has much more to do with the success of the finished creation than has the amount of money expended. Goldstein* lists the following as the aesthetic requirements for dress:

1. Beauty in color and design.
2. The effect of simplicity as opposed to gaudiness.
3. Suitability to the person and to use.
4. Genuineness as opposed to imitation.

A careful and intelligent observance of these principles can do much to improve any woman's appearance.

For the most of us the need for economy in dress presents an ever-present problem. We make many attempts to economize and often realize later that what seemed economy at the time of purchase did not actually prove to be. It is an old statement that "the best is cheapest." While most of us can not buy the most expensive fabrics or garments, it is well to remember that there are "bests" and "poorests" at every price level. The discussions previously given of fiber, quality, and design give some fundamentals to aid in selecting good textile values at any price.

*Goldstein—*Art in Every Day Life*, 1932, page 213.

A fabric which is a cheaper imitation of another material is almost never desirable. Since it is made to sell on account of its resemblance to the other fabric, usually it has not merits of its own to recommend it. It is better both in economy and appearance to buy a good cotton or rayon fabric than to buy a poor quality silk, wool, or linen fabric at the same or at a slightly higher price. Conspicuous fabrics are poor economy if they are to be worn more than one season. In the same manner, dresses or dress patterns which are extremes of seasonal fashion are poor purchases for the well-dressed woman who is practicing economy. Either fabrics or dresses which are at the peak of popularity one season will look out of date if worn the next year. On the other hand, designs which were conservative one season can usually be worn almost equally well the following year. It is poor economy to buy many dresses at a time. A better plan is to have a few at a time and wear them a great deal before they are worn out or discarded. This is particularly true in the case of weighted silks because deterioration may be almost as rapid when the garment is hanging in the closet as when it is in use.

A poorly cut or poorly constructed garment neither looks nor wears well. In buying ready made garments care should be taken to see that there are no serious defects as to cut. "Bargain" dresses are often cut so scantily as to be both uncomfortable and ugly. Tight sleeves, poor proportion of width and length, short skirts, narrow seams, and tiny hems may mark these garments. Better grades of ready made garments may be recognized by amplexness of cut, good seam width, and wide hems. One often finds that parts of cheaper dresses have been cut so that the straight grain of the fabric does not come where it should. Sleeves so cut will twist and pull out at the seams. Skirts will sag or pleats can not be made to hang straight. Dresses so cut are not worth buying as they will not be satisfactory. Cheap dresses can often be greatly improved in appearance by removing superfluous decoration such as meaningless bows, tabs, buttons, buckles, and sashes. Poor outside stitching can be removed and restitching done with good effect.

The relative economy of homemade or ready made garments is an open question, and no answer can cover all cases. The woman who is a good judge of values as well as a clever dress-maker will probably find that sometimes she can get better values in ready made garments, while at other times it will pay to make them. Frequently in times of financial depression we turn to garments made at home feeling that we get returns in economy,

quality, and individuality for our labor. The thinking woman, however, will compare values and buy or make accordingly. One should not always go on the assumption that homemade garments are cheaper and more durable than the ready made variety. Certainly, however, there are better opportunities for individuality in the dress planned and made at home if planning and making are carefully done.

CLOTHING COSTS

If at all possible it is desirable to set aside a definite sum annually for the purchase of clothing. This makes planning in terms of cost possible and should eliminate much of the ill-considered and hasty purchasing of garments which do not meet one's needs. At present many people are buying on a minimum budget or are attempting to buy only those things which are absolutely necessary. This requires much thought and planning if the wardrobe is to be adequate. A few things may be suggested to help out clothing costs.

Much thought and care must be expended on selection of a wardrobe if it is to be both economical and adequate. The woman who has an ample budget can afford a range of colors, but the woman who is limited as to money should build her wardrobe around one color. Coats, hats, dresses, shoes, and gloves must be selected so they can be worn together. When replacements are made they must fit in with what is already owned. The color selected should be a conservative one such as blue, brown, or black instead of a seasonal novelty hue. Variations can be made by using scarfs, collars and costume jewelry to add interest and color. Lines and fabrics should be conservative and the garment should be of as good quality as possible.

Bargain sales must be regarded with some doubt. If one knows definitely what she needs and is a good judge of values she may be able to get good values from such sales. Too often we lose our heads and buy goods we can not use or goods of such poor quality that they are not worth what we paid for them. The woman who desires to be well dressed on a small amount of money must avoid buying garments or accessories on impulse. All buying must be planned so as to contribute to the wardrobe as a whole.

A small wardrobe which is well selected is more economical than a large one. Many fabrics deteriorate while not in use, so it is better to have a few garments and use them enough to get the worth of one's money before deterioration or change of style makes them unfit for use. Good garments of conservative cut

usually do not go out of style or need to be remodeled before they are worn out. This is not true of the average cheap dress or coat.

Clothing care is an every day matter. An adequate closet for hanging clothes is a necessity. Garments should be hung on hangers from a rod rather than flat against the wall. They should not be crowded. A garment should be examined for spots, rips, or other damages before putting it away after each wearing. Dress shields are a necessity if some means of checking underarm perspiration is not used. Often both are desirable. Carbona or carbon tetrachloride is a satisfactory solvent for grease spots and is not inflammable. Also French chalk can often be used to remove grease spots. A collection of carbon tetrachloride, distilled water, French chalk, small soft cloths, needles, various colors of thread, snaps, dress shields, and hooks and eyes should be kept in the clothes closet for use when needed.

A careful, itemized account of all clothing costs for a year will tell us much about our buying habits as well as giving a basis for planning a budget for clothes. By keeping such an account we often find many "leaks" in our expenditures. We may find too much spent on one article, such as shoes or hose or hats, and too little on some others. For example, very cheap shoes are often an expense because of the frequent replacements needed. After one has kept such an account for a year it is also possible to plan on the basis of the amount of money which will have to be spent each year. In conclusion, it is well to remember that it is possible to be well dressed or poorly dressed at almost any income level. The deciding factor lies in the making of a good plan and then adhering to the plan in the selection or construction of all garments.

APPENDIX

SCORE CARD

It is frequently necessary for home demonstration agents, teachers and others to judge large numbers of garments which vary greatly in cost and in kind. It is often desirable to have some sort of contest in clothing work, but it is certainly against all good clothing principles to have each of the contestants make exactly the same kind of garment. The following score card has been developed to allow the comparison of garments of very different sorts on a common basis.

SCORE CARD FOR DRESS

	Total Points	Individual Points
I. FABRIC	20	
a. Suitability of fabric for purpose		5
b. Desirability of design or texture		5
c. Good color or color combination		5
d. Value in relation to cost		5
II. DESIGN OR DRESS	20	
a. Suitability of design to person		5
b. Suitability of design to purpose of garment		5
c. Simplicity and interest of decoration		5
d. Quality of design from standpoint of current style		5
III. WORKMANSHIP	20	
a. Cutting of garment		5
b. Selection of seams and finishes		5
c. Quality of machine stitching		5
d. Quality of handwork		5
IV. FIT	20	
a. Set of sleeves and collar		5
b. Location of shoulder lines and other seam lines		5
c. Fitting of garment at waist and hip lines		5
d. Adjustment of hem		5
V. VALUES	20	
a. Cost as compared to ready made garments		5
b. Value as compared to ready made garments		5
c. Quality of design as compared to ready made garments		5
d. Workmanship as compared to ready made garments		5
	100	100

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL

A bulletin of this sort is of necessity quite condensed and fairly general. To facilitate its use and to emphasize many points which are discussed quite briefly, some illustrative material is desirable. A group of posters and charts has been prepared for the Florida State Extension Office and will be circulated by the office among the home demonstration agents of the state. Other people using the bulletin may be interested in the list of charts and posters in order to make up similar materials for themselves. Mimeographed pages giving the general plan of the charts or posters will be sent to teachers and others within the state who send requests for them to the State Home Demonstration Office, Tallahassee, Florida.

POSTERS AND CHARTS

1. Know What You Buy
2. Rayons
3. Structural Defects of Fabrics
4. Surface Finishes
5. Fabric Texture
6. Textile Designs
7. Fashion Figures and Real Figures
8. Costumes on Fashion Figures and Real Figures
9. The Dress Form
10. Seam Finishes
11. Garment Finishes
12. Figure Defects and How to Conceal Them
13. Cut Clothing Costs
14. Care of Clothing
15. Color Combinations

SELECTED REFERENCES**Color and Design in Clothing**

Art in Every Day Life—Revised—Harriet and Vetta Goldstein.
Macmillan.

Textiles

Textile Fibers and Their Use—Katherine P. Hess. Lippincott.
Textile Fabrics—George H. Johnson. Harper.

Clothing Construction

Manual of Clothing Construction—Brown. Ginn.